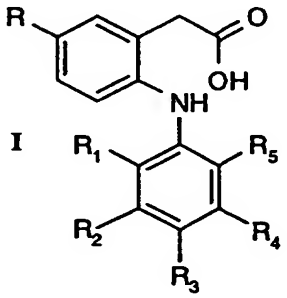
CLAIMS

1. process for the production of a compound of Formula I, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable prodrug ester thereof,



I

wherein R is methyl or ethyl;

R_1 is chloro or fluoro;

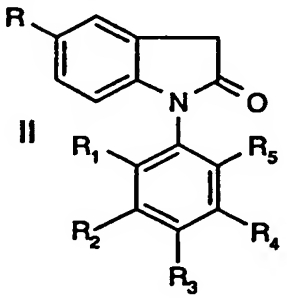
R_2 is hydrogen or fluoro;

R_3 is hydrogen, fluoro, chloro, methyl, ethyl, methoxy, ethoxy or hydroxy;

R_4 is hydrogen or fluoro; and

R_5 is chloro, fluoro, trifluoromethyl or methyl,

provided that R_1, R_2, R_4 and R_5 are not all fluoro when R is ethyl and R_3 is H; comprising cleaving a lactam of formula II



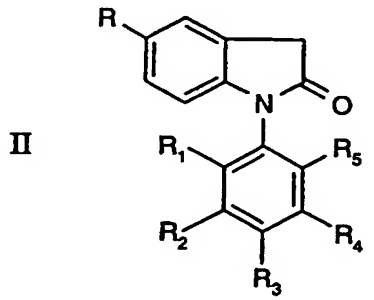
II

wherein the symbols are as defined above with a base; and in the above process, if desired, temporarily protecting any interfering reactive groups and then isolating the resulting compound f the invention; and, if desired, converting the free carboxylic acid f the compound of formula I into a pharmaceutically acceptable ester derivative thereof; and/or if desired,

converting the free acid of formula I into a salt or a resulting salt into the free acid or into another salt.

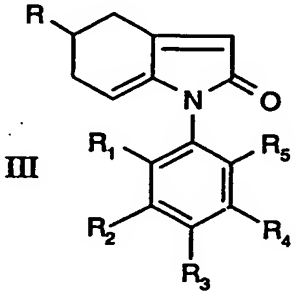
2. A process selected from

a) a process for the production of a lactam of formula II



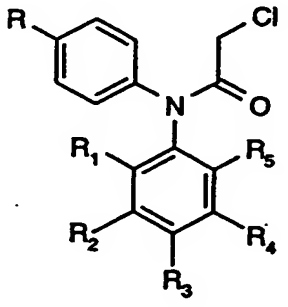
II

which comprises oxidizing of a lactam of formula III



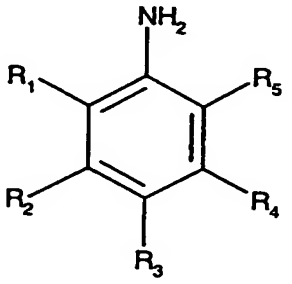
III

b) a process for the production of the lactam of formula II as defined in a) above, which comprises cyclisation of a compound of formula VII



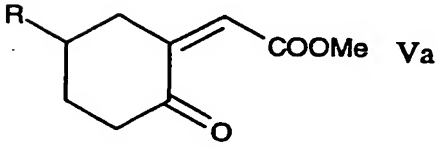
VII

c) a process for the preparation of a compound of formula III as defined above comprising coupling as aniline derivative of formula IV

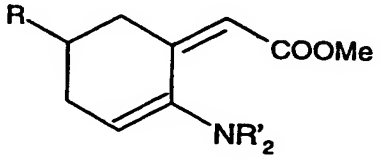


IV

with a cyclohexanone derivative of formula Va or an amino substituted cyclohexene derivative of formula Vb



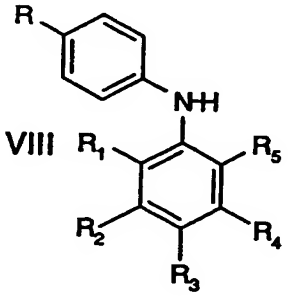
Va



Vb

wherein R is ethyl or methyl and R' is lower alkyl or similar or NR'_2 forms a ring as in piperidine or morpholine.

d) a process for the production of a compound of formula VII which comprises N-acylation of a diphenylamine of formula VIII

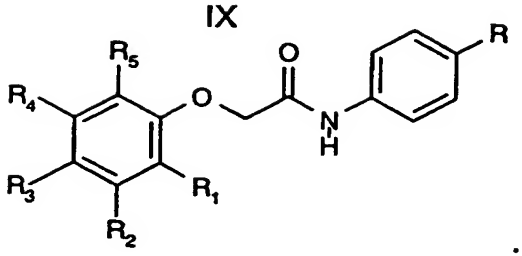


VIII

with a haloacetyl chloride

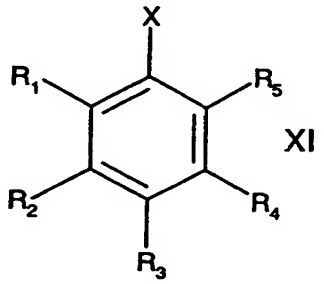
e) a process for the preparation of a compound of formula VIII which comprises rearrangement and hydrolysis of a compound of formula IX.

IX



;

f) a process for the production of a compound of formula VIII which comprises coupling of a halobenzene derivative of formula XI with p-toluidine or 4-ethyl-aniline

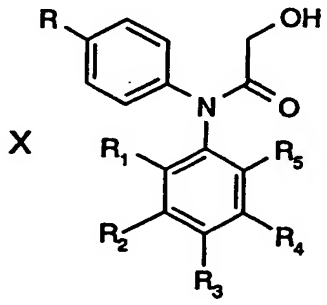


XI

where X is a halogen

g) a process for the production of a compound of formula VIII as defined in d) above which comprises coupling an aniline derivative of formula IV as defined in c) above with 4-bromotoluene or 1-ethyl-4-bromobenzene

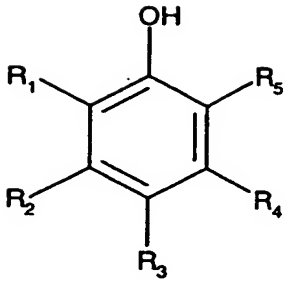
h) a process for the production of a compound of formula VIII as defined in d) above which comprises cleavage of a compound of formula X



X

i) a process for the formation of a compound of formula X as defined in h) above which comprises rearrangement of a compound of formula IX as defined in e) above

j) a process for the production of a compound of formula IX as defined in e) above which comprises alkylation of a compound of formula XII



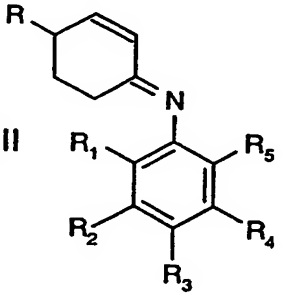
XII

with 2-chloro-N-(4-methylphenyl)acetamide or 2 chloro-N-(4-ethylphenyl)acetamide

k) a process for the production of a compound of formula VIII as defined in d) above which comprises alkylation of a compound of formula XII as defined in j) above with 2-chloro-N-(4-methylphenyl)acetamide or 2 chloro-N-(4-ethylphenyl)acetamide followed by rearrangement and cleavage

l) a process for the production of a compound of formula VIII as defined in d) above comprising oxidation of the corresponding compound of formula XIII (or a tautomer thereof)

XIII

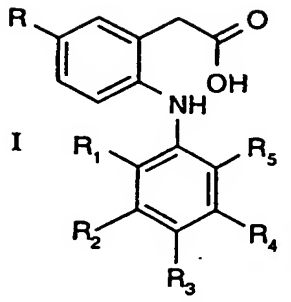


m) a process for the production of a compound of formula XIII as defined in l) above which comprises coupling 1-methoxy-4-methylcyclohexa-1,4-diene or 1-methoxy-4-ethylcyclohexa-1,4-diene with an aniline derivative of formula IV as defined in c) above, and

n) a process for the production of a compound of formula VIII as defined in d) above comprising coupling 1-methoxy-4-methylcyclohexa-1,4-diene or 1-methoxy-4-ethylcyclohexa-1,4-diene with an aniline derivative or formula IV as defined in c) above, followed by oxidation,

wherein the symbols are as defined in claim 1.

3. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula I as defined in claim 1.



which comprises one or more of processes a) to n) as defined in claim 2 and optionally a process according to claim 1.

4. A process according to claim 3 for the preparation of a compound selected from:

5-methyl-2-(2',4'-dichloro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2', 3', 5', 6'-tetrafluoroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2', 3', 4', 6'-tetrafluoroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2',6'-dichloroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2',6'-dichloroanilino)phenylacetic acid, potassium salt;

5-methyl-2-(2',6'-dichloroanilino)phenylacetic acid, sodium salt;

5-methyl-2-(2'-chloro-6'fluoroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2',6'-dichloro-4'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2'-chloro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2',4'-difluro-6'-chloroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2'-fluoro-4',6'-dichloroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2'-chloro-4'-fluoro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2'-fluoro-6'-chloroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2'-chloro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2',3',6'-trifluroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2',3',5',6'-tetrafluoro-4'-ethoxyanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2'-chloro-4',6'-difluroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2',4'-dichloro-6'-fluoroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2',4'-dichloro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2'-fluoro-4'-chloro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2',4'-difluoro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2'-chloro-4'-fluoro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2'-chloro-4'-hydroxy-6'-fluoroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2'-fluoro-6'-trifluoromethylanilino)phenylacetic acid, and

5-methyl-2-(2',4'-dichloro-6'-trifluoromethylanilino)phenylacetic acid,

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof; and pharmaceutically acceptable prodrug esters thereof.

5. A process according to claim 3 for the preparation of a compound selected from:

5-methyl-2-(2', 3', 4', 6'-tetrafluoroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2',6'-dichloroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2'-chloro-6'fluoroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2',6'-dichloro-4'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2'-chloro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-methyl-2-(2'-chloro-4'-fluoro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2'-fluoro-6'-chloroanilino)phenylacetic acid;

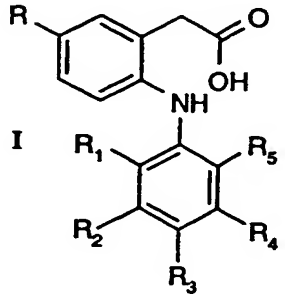
5-ethyl-2-(2'-chloro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid;

5-ethyl-2-(2',3',6'-trifluroanilino)phenylacetic acid, and

5-ethyl-2-(2',4'-dichloro-6'-methylanilino)phenylacetic acid,

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof; and pharmaceutically acceptable prodrug esters thereof.

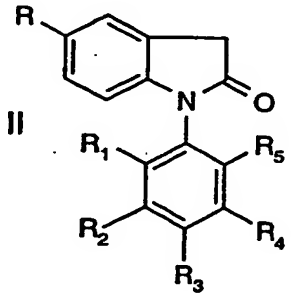
6. A compound of formula I, as defined in claim 1



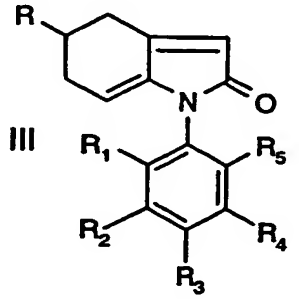
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, or a pharmaceutically acceptable prodrug ester thereof, when prepared by a process as defined in claim 3.

7. A compound selected from

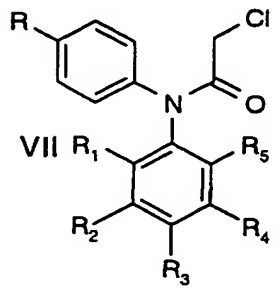
a) a compound of formula II



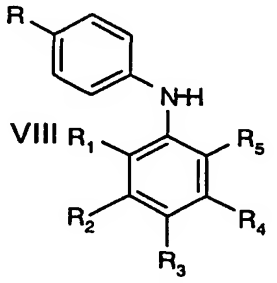
b) a compound of formula III



c) a compound of formula VII

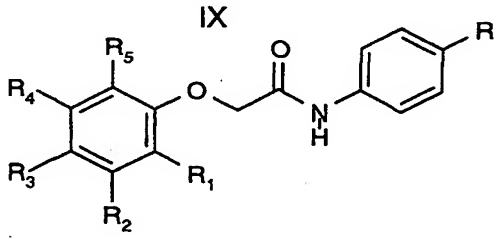


d) a compound of formula VIII

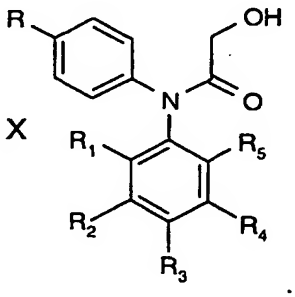


provided that R is not methyl when all of R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4 and R_5 are fluoro;

e) a compound of formula IX

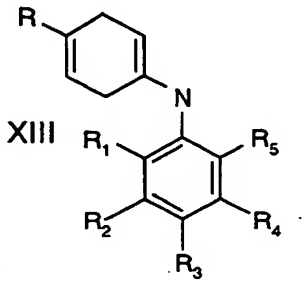


f) a compound of formula X



or

g) a compound of formula XIII



wherein the symbols are as defined in claim 1.